

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Amendments in General

1. Claim 14 has been canceled.
2. In the last correspondence, claim 1 was amended to include the feature of the flexible piping connector including at least one rib on a portion of an internal surface. This feature is shown in Figure 4 and is designated by the number 16. This feature is also described at the end of paragraph 2 on page 7. The purpose of the protrusion is to provide a pair of shoulders 18 against which other components of the connector may abut as described in paragraphs 26 to 29.
3. Applicant has canceled claim 14 from the application, therefore further discussion of this rejection is not necessary.
4. Also in the last correspondence claim 15 was amended to include the additional feature of an annular depression, which acts as the weakening point. The depression and the rib are positioned at the same axial location. The presence of a rib permits the use of two annular members to provide support to the flexible connector while ensuring that the bore through the connector is of a substantially constant diameter.
5. The Examiner has again rejected these claims even as they were amended and cites the Steele reference as an anticipatory prior art reference.
6. Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's assertions for the following reasons:
7. Claim 1 of the application as it has been currently amended includes the limitation that the flexible piping connector has a first end and a second end, a tubular flexible member with substantially smooth inner bore surface and at least one rib on a portion of an internal surface.
8. The comments related to this amendment clarify that the item being claimed as the rib is the item designated as number 16 in Fig. 4 of the application as filed.
9. The Examiner in his comments then stated that the Applicant's amendments and the arguments associated therewith are not persuasive because the Examiner asserts, that the portion of the structure in the Steele reference which extends between the reinforcing bands 13 constitutes a rib as it has been claimed by the Applicant.

10. A rib is defined in the Merriam-Webster On-Line Dictionary of the English Language as follows:

Main Entry: **¹rib**

Pronunciation: 'rib

Function: *noun*

Etymology: Middle English, from Old English *ribb*; akin to Old High German *rippi* rib, Old Church Slavonic *rebro*, and probably to Greek *erephein* to roof over

1 a : any of the paired curved bony or partly cartilaginous rods that stiffen the walls of the body of most vertebrates and protect the viscera **b** : a cut of meat including a rib -- see BEEF illustration **c** [from the account of Eve's creation from Adam's rib in Gen 2:21-22] : WIFE

2 : something resembling a rib in shape or function: as **a** (1) : a traverse member of the frame of a ship that runs from keel to deck (2) : a light fore-and-aft member in an airplane's wing **b** : one of the stiff strips supporting an umbrella's fabric **c** : one of the arches in Romanesque and Gothic vaulting meeting and crossing one another and dividing the whole vaulted space into triangles

3 : an elongated ridge: as **a** (1) : a vein of an insect's wing (2) : one of the primary veins of a leaf **b** : one of the ridges in a knitted or woven fabric

11. Implicit with this definition is the meaning that a rib is a portion of an entire body or device which is proportionally smaller or more narrow than the body of the entire piece. This is consistent with the synonyms which are associated with the word such as strip, rod, ridge or vein. This is the definition of the word that comports to the meaning in common use as demonstrated above, and which would be known to a person of skill in the art.

12. This is also the meaning that the writer of the Steele patent used to describe the numerous narrow protrusions 15 which extend from the outer surface of the device in the Steele patent. There are no such ribs on the inner surface portion of the Steele device. The Examiner's finding that the entire inner portion of the Steele device between the two minor grooves constitutes a rib is wholly inconsistent with the use of the word rib in common language as well as the use of this word within the Steele patent itself.

13. The Steele patent simply does not disclose a device that contains a rib within the inner surface of the device. All of the ribs in the Steele patent are located upon the outer surface of the body.

14. In the present invention the rib is smaller than the entire body of the device and this ridge is located within this inner surface of the device. In as much as the Steele device fails to teach each and every feature of the present invention, Applicant respectfully submits that the Steele reference does not anticipate the present invention as set forth in claim 1 and its associated dependent claims.

15. With regard to claim 15, claim 15 as amended includes the limitation of an annular depression in the outer surface, which corresponds to location of the ridge located within the inner surface of the device. The Steele reference fails to teach or include this feature. The Steele reference teaches the presence of depressions located within the outer surface of the Steele device so as to define the upwardly projecting ribs. However, the Steele reference fails to teach the inclusion of any such annular rib or projection within the inner surface. Furthermore, the smaller depressions in the outer surface do not each individually correspond to a projection in the inner surface so as to align along the same axis, as the language of the claim requires. Therefore, the Steele reference does not anticipate the present invention as the Examiner has asserted.

16. In view of the aforementioned comments and arguments, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner's rejection be withdrawn and the claims of the application passed for allowance.

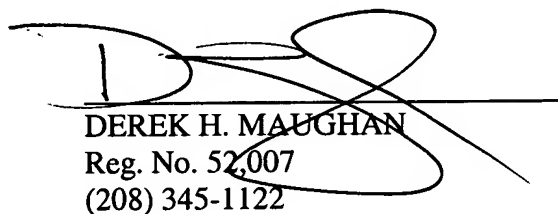
CONCLUSION

Reconsideration and allowance of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

In the event that the Examiner, believes that none of the subject matter in the application is patentable after review of the here presented comments and amendments, the undersigned hereby requests a telephone interview to discuss the application.

DATED this 14th day of June 2005.

Very respectfully,



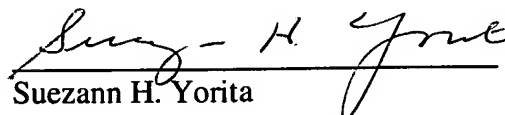
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